

BA 1559

ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH

1886

RUXTON

PRIVATE

The congregation of St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church forms a link with the period before Emancipation. The church body traces its origins to the efforts of both free blacks and slaves who were aided by a local land-owning family, the Fishpaws. The church building is a replacement structure of 1886 but probably stands on the foundations of a log structure built in 1835. This congregation's history can be documented by deeds, mortgages, and various county maps. A water-color drawing of the original church building executed by Eliza Hawkins survives and bears the date of 1835. The first minister was James Aquilla Scott, a free man and a blacksmith, whose residence on Falls Road can be found on the 1850 county map. The surviving church is a gem-like example of country gothic, constructed in a tasteful manner by a Towson carpenter named George Horn or Horne. The builder's identity is provided by the Baltimore Sun's report of the cornerstone ceremony. The Scott family has maintained this church through the entire period of declining membership and financial burdens.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

Form NR-100 (Rev. 6-77)

received

date entered

1. Name

historic

and/or common St. John's Church

2. Location

street & number 7538 Bellona Avenue

not for publication

city, town Ruxton

vicinity of

congressional district

Second

state Maryland

code

24

county Baltimore

code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> In process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: None

4. Owner of Property

Trustees of the Colored Methodist Protestant St. John's Chapel of Baltimore County
name c/o Mrs. Marie Scott Brown and Miss Esther Scott

street & number 6203 Falls Road

city, town Baltimore

vicinity of

state Maryland 21204

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse

street & number 401 Bosley Avenue

city, town Towson

state Maryland 21204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust
Sites Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1976 -1979

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Annapolis

state Maryland

7. Description

BA-1559

Condition

___ excellent
___ ☒ good
___ fair

___ deteriorated
___ ruins
___ unexposed

Check one

___ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
___ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

St. John's Church, Ruxton, in Baltimore County is a late nineteenth century frame Gothic Revival gable-roofed structure with board and batten siding, stylized lancet windows, and Queen Anne decorative detailing. The building rests on a rubble stone foundation facing east and bears a cornerstone (southeast corner) inscribed "St. John's A.U.M.P. Church A.D. 1886". The interior has architrave moldings; narrow verticle board wainscoting; turned balusters, newels, and columns at the altar; plastered walls and ceilings; narrow board flooring; and oak pews. The integrity of the church is good. The property is enhanced by a one and a half story stuccoed stone house which is believed to date from about 1835 and used as a parsonage and a turn of the century, possibly 1890s, simple frame rectangular social hall. The parsonage has extensive fire damage to the interior, though the stone walls remain intact, and the social hall is in poor condition but does retain much of its original features.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The church is a late nineteenth century frame Gothic Revival structure with Queen Anne decorative detailing. The rectangular building, which rests on a rubble stone foundation, measures 35 feet 11 inches by 20 feet 7 inches and has three principal windows on the side or north and south elevations and two principal windows and a central entrance on the east or facade elevation. A cornerstone (southeast corner) is inscribed "St. John's A.U.M.P. Church A.D. 1886". The exterior of the structure is sheathed with board and batten siding with scaled shingling in the gables (east and west elevations). The roof is covered with new fiber shingles and has a low brick chimney protruding along the south side.

The principal windows have louvered shutters and double-hung wooden sashes with four lights and are stylized lancet type on the exterior and rectangular on the interior. The entranceway has paneled double doors beneath a rectangular transom with stained glass lights and a Gothic influenced surround. Circular windows with square and rectangular lights are located in both gable ends. The interior has architrave moldings on the windows and door; narrow verticle board wainscoting; turned balustered railing, newels, and columns at the altar; plastered walls and ceiling; narrow board flooring; and oak pews.

The building known as the "parsonage" is a one and a half story stuccoed rubble stone structure which is believed to date from about 1835 when the original church on this site was erected. The house, which was extensively damaged by fire in 1981, has a three bay facade or east elevation with a central entrance and consisting of one room up, one room down, and a one story frame wing to the west which was completely destroyed by the fire. The stone walls remain intact but the frame portions (roof and wing) have lost integrity. The frame wing probably dated from about 1900.

Below is a description of the building prepared about 1978 for the Trust by Wayne L. Field, II:

" The parsonage is a true one-and-one-half story dwelling with a plan of one room up and one down, with a single room added to the rear (or west). Dimensions are 20 feet, 3 inches on the main facade by a depth of 18 feet, 4 inches.

3. Significance

BA-1559

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1886 (church) Builder/Architect George Horn, builder (church)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Applicable Criteria: A and C

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The St. John's Church, Ruxton, and its accompanying buildings, the "parsonage" and the social hall, are significant for association with black religious and social history in the Bare Hills - Ruxton area of Baltimore County. These buildings were created as a center for the religious and social activities of a black congregation that was formed in the 1830s and who acquired the site in 1833. Around the turn of the century, members of the congregation, which was always small, worked primarily for the affluent white population whose estates and large houses bordered the complex. As a church built in a modest interpretation of the Gothic Revival style with Queen Anne influenced decorative detailing, St. John's Church is a typical example of churches erected in the rural regions of Maryland in the late nineteenth century. These buildings characteristically were small scale frame rectangular structures with sharply pitched gable roofs, board and batten siding, lancet shaped windows, and shingle decoration. The St. John's Church is particularly important in that it remains essentially intact and thus is an indicator of the craftsmanship available in the region.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

The church history is intimately tied to the Scott family of the Bare Hills neighborhood on the Falls Road a mile or more north of the present Baltimore city line. The church was originally convenient to Falls Road residents but, in 1861, it was rendered somewhat less accessible by the impoundment of Jones Falls and the filling up of Lake Roland.

The Scott family traces its line to a free man, believed to have been part Indian, Tobias Scott of Saint Mary's County. His son, James Aquilla Scott (I) was born in 1784 and settled in Baltimore County, purchasing land on Falls Road from Johnzee Hook in 1839 (2). James Aquilla Scott (I) practiced as a blacksmith and served as a minister. His home at Falls Road and Walnut Avenue appears as "A. Scott" property on Sidney's 1850 county map. (3) The Scotts, Aquilla and his wife, had at least eleven children, including Aquilla Scott (II). (4)

In 1833, Elijah Fishpaw and his wife, Catherine, and also Mary Fishpaw deeded three-quarters of an acre of "The Hopyard" to Benjamin Johnson, Aquilla Scott, Thomas Harvey, Wesley Hayes, Joshua Harvey, " . . . all colored people and descendants from Africa who are nominated trustees for certain purposes hereafter . . . in trust to and for . . . the use of that part of the descendants of Africa which forms and makes the Bethel Episcopal Methodist Religious Society for their use to make a burying ground on for the interment of their dead and for them to erect a meeting house thereon for the purpose of meeting there as often as they may think proper in order to worship Almighty God in spirit and truth . . ." (5)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #7

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .75 acres

Quadrangle name Cockeysville quad.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	1 8	3 5 8 2 4 0	4 3 6 6 2 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
E			
G			

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated boundaries are delineated on Continuation Sheet #8

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name title Ronald L. Andrews
John McGrain

organization Maryland Historical Trust

date November 1981

street & number 21 State Circle

telephone 301-269-2438

city or town Annapolis

state Maryland 21401

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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Inventory—Nomination Form**

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St. John's Church
Baltimore County
Maryland

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The walls are made of uncoursed brownish fieldstone that has been stuccoed. The stone rises to the apex of the gables. There is also a gable-end roof which has an almost oversized roof dormer. There are no eaves on the ends, and even the sides have an overhang of only 10 to 12 inches. While the dormer appears to be original to the present roof, its six-light casements are not compatible with the four-light casements of the gables. Machine-sawn rafters and cut wire nails suggest that if this building is more than 80 or 90 years old, its roof has been changed.

Each end of the parsonage is windowless except for a small casement window in each gable. That of the north is centralized but the south window is off center to the west. It is interesting to note that these deep casements are presently mounted on the inside bay of the opening. The main facade faces east, as does the church. It is three bays wide: a centrally located door flanked by windows. The south window, however, is not as large as the north and it may be an alteration. The door and north window share the same wooden jack arch and the taller north window has a large fieldstone sill.

The west facade is nearly obliterated by the frame shed-roofed addition. Interior examination suggests that it once had a door on the north side and a single window on the south side of it (which might have been the original appearance of the east facade as well).

The single room downstairs is characterized by the windowless north wall and the presence of the enclosed stairs on the south wall. A flue chimney occupies the center of the west wall and separated the door and window.

The original mouldings of this room are a plain architrave that is not unlike the design seen in some Federal period houses.

It appears that the south window of the east wall was cut through to light the stairs. The enclosure of those stairs is not original and one wonders what relationship there is, if any, between this fact and the off-center gable window at the top. The placement of that window and the protruding beam on the exterior of the south end could be indicative of a fireplace; however, the south side would be an odd place for one.

The second level is characterized by its knee walls and trapezoidal ceiling. The room is divided transversely by a partition. That wall bisects the dormer, which gives each half an east window and a gable window.

Deterioration in this area allows one to see machine-cut laths and parts of the roof construction. The roof consists of vertically sawn timbers cut by machine. Rafters are joined at the top by a ridgeboard and the trusses are nailed to flat false plates, in some instances with wire nails. The upper half of each knee-wall is for a."

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St. John's Church

Baltimore County, Maryland

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The social hall is a turn of the century, possibly 1890s, one and a half story frame rectangular structure with a north/south axised gable roof and small shed-roofed one-story extrusions on the gabled ends. The building is covered with brown-toned insule brick siding and rests on a masonry foundation. An interior chimney projects from near the center of the east elevation. The east and west or side elevations have three bays each. The principal windows of the first floor have long rectangular, double-hung wooden sashes with the upper quarter paneled shut.

The interior consists of a combination of large and small rooms which is said not to be the original arrangement. The interior has simple architraves. The building is in a deteriorated condition though appears to retain much of its integrity.

The cemetery lies between and to the west of the church and parsonage. Some gravesites are located under the present driveway. The cemetery was begun in the 1830s and has been in continuous use though on a limited basis. Although some of the markers no longer stand erect, most remain in good condition.

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St. John's Church
Baltimore County
Maryland

HISTORY AND SUPPORT Continued

The church appears on the water supply survey map of 1852 and on the 1857 decorative county map by Robert Taylor. (6) The original place of worship was log, and is depicted in a contemporary watercolor by Eliza Hawkins, who marked the drawing with the date 1835. (7)

James Aquilla Scott dropped dead at age 76 on February 22, 1858. His tombstone at his Falls Road home graveyard reads, "Church of AME. Here lies Aquilla Scott the minister who passed away while in prayer in the Church below now joins the Church above." (8)

A stone in the churchyard on Bellona Avenue mentions another early member, reading, "In memory of Harriett Tate, Beloved Mother of St. Johns . . ."

The pulpit was taken over by James Aquilla Scott II, who also doubled as a blacksmith. The second James Aquilla Scott bought a slave wife from a Cuba Road landowner to rescue her from a life of abuse. Her name was Abnar Gough according to her gravestone, although Aquilla Scott's will called her Honora. (9)

The church body was incorporated on May 2, 1860, as St. John's Colored Methodist Protestant Church. (10) In July 1866, Aquilla Phillips and his wife, Priscilla (Scott) Phillips, conveyed the three-to-four acre church property to the trustees of a corporation entitled "The Colored Methodist Protestant St. John's Chapel of Baltimore County". The consideration named was \$800. (11)

The 1866 deed reflects some problem that had beset the congregation. Aquilla Phillips had taken personal title to the same property donated to the trustees of 1833 the year before conveying to the new corporation. Phillips purchased it from a white landowner of the Ruxton area, Lewis J. Roberts, and paid \$800. The deed index failed to show how the trustees lost temporary control of this lot. (12)

The 1876 Tax Ledger described the improvements at "St. John's Methodist P. Church" as:

Tract of Land E. Side of N.C.R.R. near Lake Roland 1 Acre, less church occup. Improvements - 2 small stone houses. (13)

E. Robinson's 1882 map of the Baltimore region showed three buildings on a small lot near Lake Station on the Northern Central Railroad south of Malvern Avenue. (14)

The original church perished, possibly between 1876 and 1886, because a new structure was established that year, and the county paper announced:

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4

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St. John's Church
Baltimore County
Maryland

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

The corner-stone for St. John's A.U.M.P. Church, Lake Roland, will be laid by Rev. E. W. Scott on Sunday, August 29, at 3 o'clock p.m., to which all are invited. (15)

The ceremonies were reported in the Sun the following day, and the text sheds some light on the church history:

Corner-stone Laying. The corner-stone of the St. John's A.U.M.P. Church, near Lake Station, Northern Central Railroad, was laid yesterday with appropriate ceremonies. Rev. D. W. Scott, president of the A.U.M.P. Conference, preached an excellent sermon, the service being held in the open air, in the shade of a number of large trees. The contents of the stone were a copy of the Bible, a Methodist hymn book, a copy of the Discipline of the church, also a copy of the SUN of Saturday, a paper on which was written the names of the President of the United States, Governor of Maryland, and a list of judges of the Baltimore County Circuit. The church will be a pretty little frame building, 20 by 35 feet, situated on a hill overlooking Lake Roland, about a quarter of a mile above Lake Station. The corner-stone is situated in the south-east corner of the church. A number of members of the colored lodge of the order of the Seven Wise Men of Melvale, were in attendance. Mr. George Horn, of Towsontown, is the builder. (16)

The papers also show that the Rev. E. W. Scott, a member of the founding family, preached the same evening at a camp meeting held at Paradise Grove on Merryman's Lane (somewhere near present University Parkway). Other newspaper mentions show that Edwin Scott (1841-1891) was the pastor of Towson's black church, St. James A.U.M.P. (17)

The new church was of tasteful design, its windows trimmed in stained glass, its outer walls in the purposely picturesque board and batten format. The contractor is listed in State directories as a carpenter in Towson in 1878 and 1887, the last name spelled both Horn and Horne. (18)

The second James Aquilla Scott lived until 1892. The church was affiliated with the A.M.E. denomination but three generations of Scotts held the title as trustees. In the 1950s, the parish started to decline due to changes in transportation patterns, the development of other churches, and the disappearance of live-in help in the large suburban houses of Ruxton. The local church structure tried to persuade the family to surrender the church to the conference, but the Scotts declined. Eventually, the congregation could no longer support a minister and, after carrying on with occasional services, the doors were closed.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #5

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St. John's Church
Baltimore County
Maryland

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

The Scott family found themselves forced to pay residential taxes in spite of the fact that the entire premises is either church or cemetery property. To propound the problem, the State Department of Assessment and Taxation charged them with two acres of land and also failed to mark the site on the tax map and, in addition to that, indexed the account to the wrong tax map and (the one containing Lutherville), and also listed the address as the Falls Road. (19)

In 1980-1981, with the help of the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Improvement Association, the family was relieved of the tax burden and assured of a three-year refund. In early 1981, a number of newspaper articles in a neighborhood publication recounted the struggles of the trustees to maintain the chapel, and a scout group agreed to help weed the cemetery, and the Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission agreed to consider the site for the Preliminary Landmarks List.

Shortly after receiving the limited local publicity in the Roland Park-based publication, The Messenger, a suspicious fire took place in the parsonage on the afternoon of March 23, 1981, burning some relatively late partitions and carpenter work in the attic.

NOTES:

1. Gail O'Donovan, "Notes, St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Scott Family", Ruxton, Md., Typescript, March 20, 1981.
2. Baltimore City Deeds, TK 232:222.
3. J. C. Sidney and P. J. Browne, "Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys", James M. Stephens, Publisher, Baltimore, 1850.
4. O'Donovan, Notes, 1981.
5. Baltimore City Deeds, TK 293:___ (October 29, 1839).
6. Robert Taylor, "Map of the City and County of Baltimore from Actual Surveys", Baltimore, 1857. Thomas P. Chiffelle, "Map of the City of Baltimore and Part of Baltimore County, including the Valley of the Great Gunpowder River . . .", A. Hoen, Baltimore, 1852.
7. Original artwork in possession of Mrs. Marie Brown, 6203 Falls Road, Bare Hills.
8. O'Donovan, "Notes".
9. Baltimore County Wills, JEB 14:89.

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St. John's Church
Baltimore County
Maryland

NOTES: (Continued)

10. Baltimore County Incorporation Records, Index, Liber JB 1, Index Page "S".
The full text was copied into the Baltimore County Chatel Records, Liber 4:175,
a series that has been moved to the Hall of Records, Annapolis.
11. Baltimore County Deeds, GHL 51:134.
12. B.C. Deeds, JHL 47:57.
13. Baltimore County Tax Ledger, District 9, 1876, n.p. No stone houses are to
to be found in the John Fishpaw Jr. listing for "The Hopyard" in the 1798
tax list.
14. E. Robinson, "Map of the City of Baltimore and Vicinity", New York, 1882.
15. Baltimore County Union, August 21, 1886.
16. Baltimore Sun, August 30, 1886, p.4, col. 5.
17. American, August 30, 1886, p. 4. Baltimore County Union, November 27, 1886.
18. John R. Bland, Ed., The Maryland Directory and State Gazetteer, 1887. The
Baltimore Publishing Company: Baltimore, 1887, p. 121. Also, 1878, p. 544.
19. O'Donovan, "Notes", 1981.

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St. John's Church
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Maryland

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Baltimore County Land and Will Records, Courthouse, Towson, Maryland

Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory: Baltimore County (BA-1559, BA-1771, and BA-1772). John McGrain and Wayne Nield, II, surveyors.

O'Donovan, Gail. Notes on file at the Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, Maryland

9. Major Bibliographical References

BA-1559

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #7

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .75 acresQuadrangle name Cockeysville quad.Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	1 8	3 5 8 2 4 0	4 3 6 6 2 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
---	--	--	--

D			
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E			
---	--	--	--

F			
---	--	--	--

G			
---	--	--	--

H			
---	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated boundaries are delineated on Continuation Sheet #8

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Ronald L. Andrews
	John McGrain

organization Maryland Historical Trustdate November 1981street & number 21 State Circletelephone 301-269-2438city or town Annapolisstate Maryland 21401

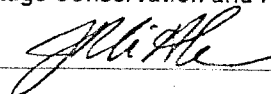
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

2-5-82title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

St. John's Church, Ruxton

Continuation sheet Baltimore County, Maryland Item number

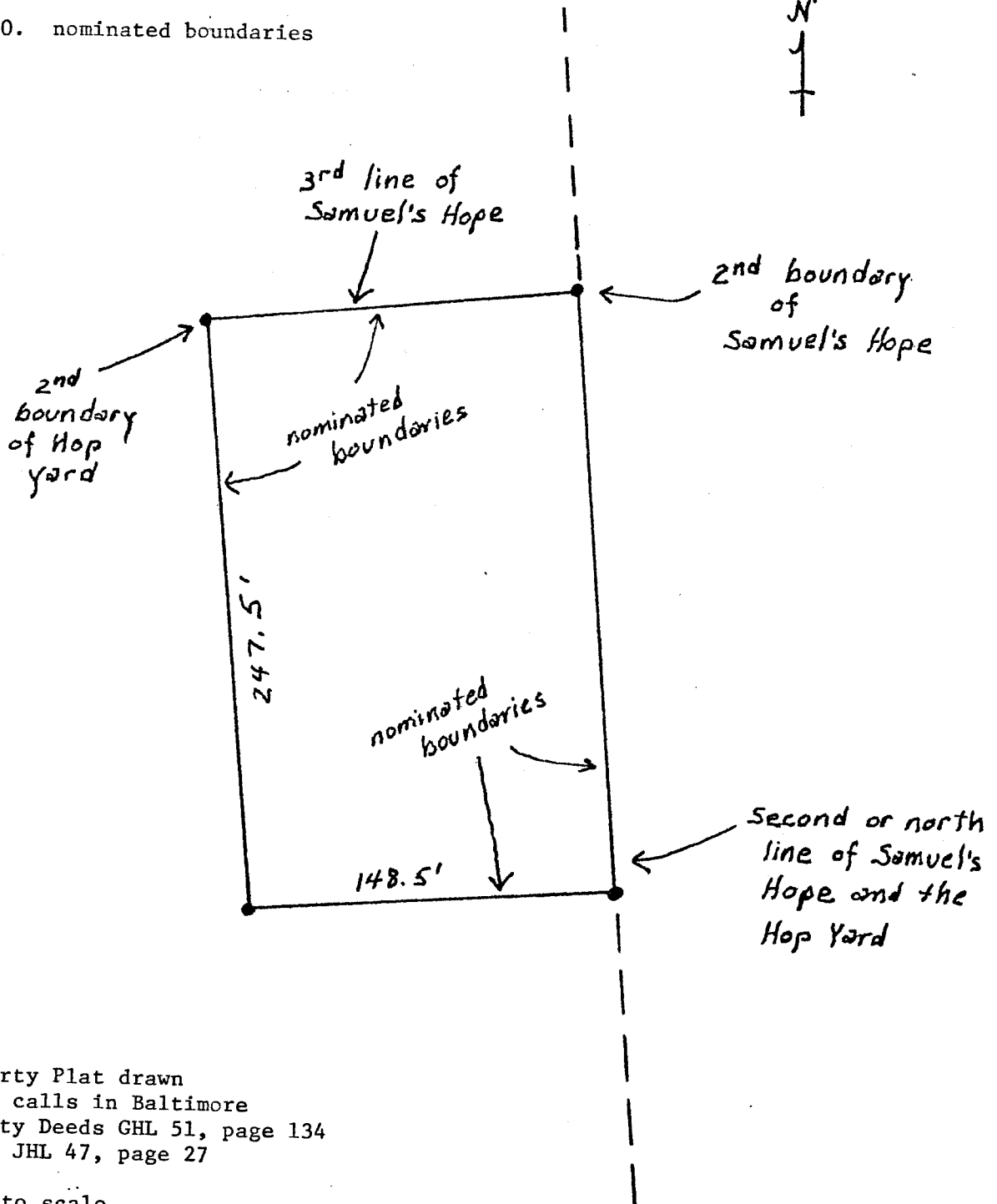
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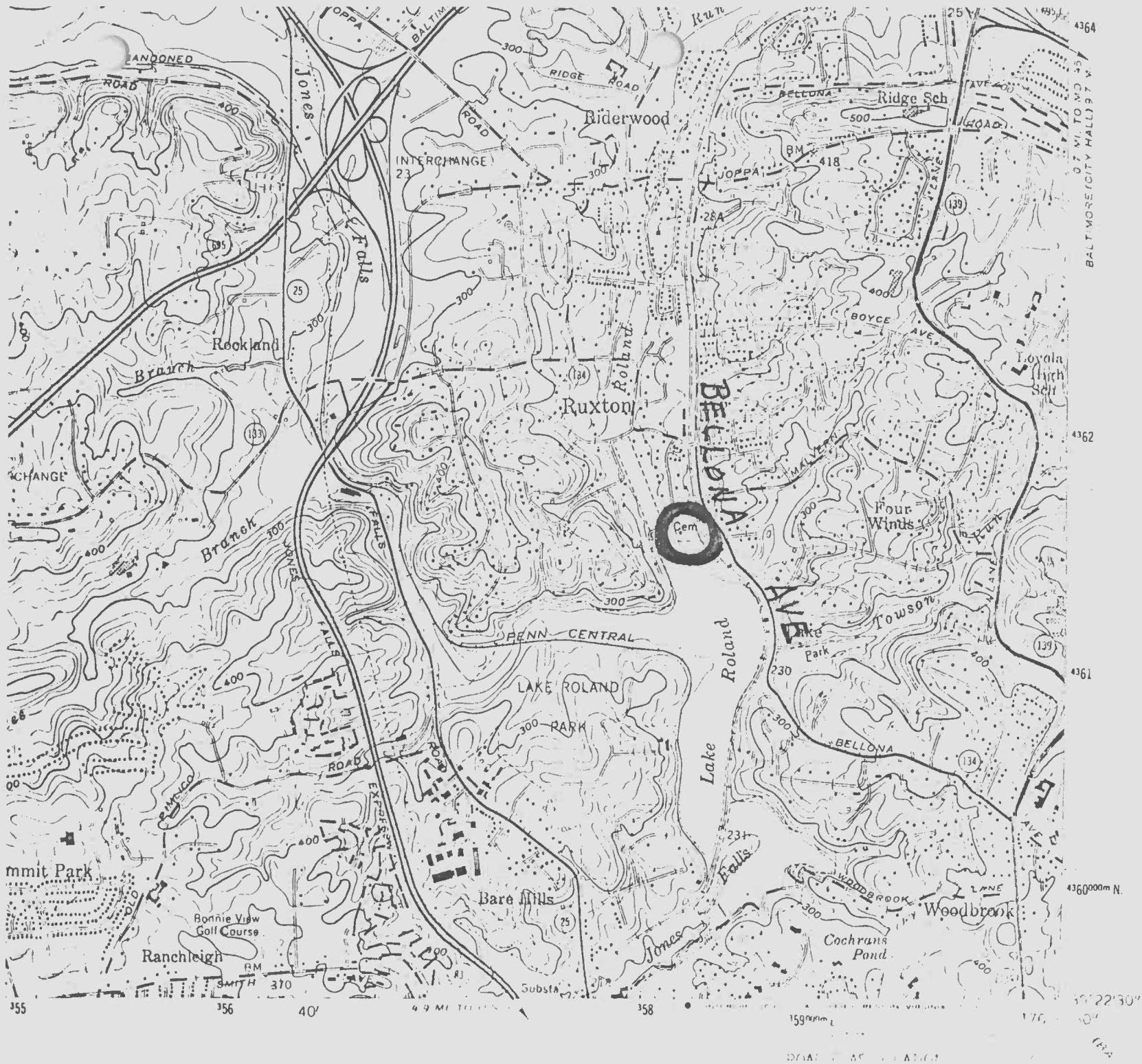
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date entered

Section 10. nominated boundaries



Property Plat drawn
from calls in Baltimore
County Deeds GHL 51, page 134
and JHL 47, page 27

not to scale



Cockeysville Quad

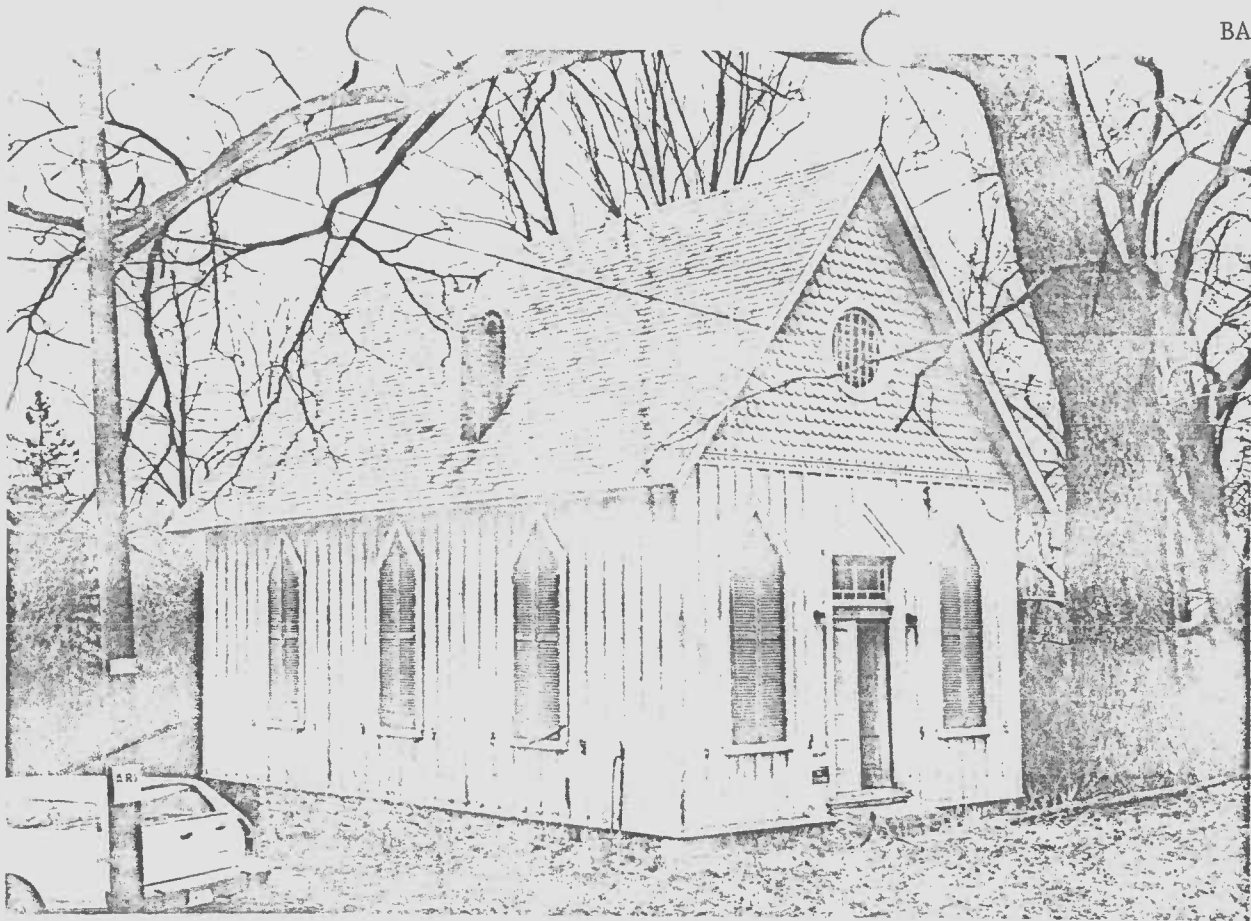
Johns Church
Baltimore Co.
BA-1559



St. John's Church,
Ruxton

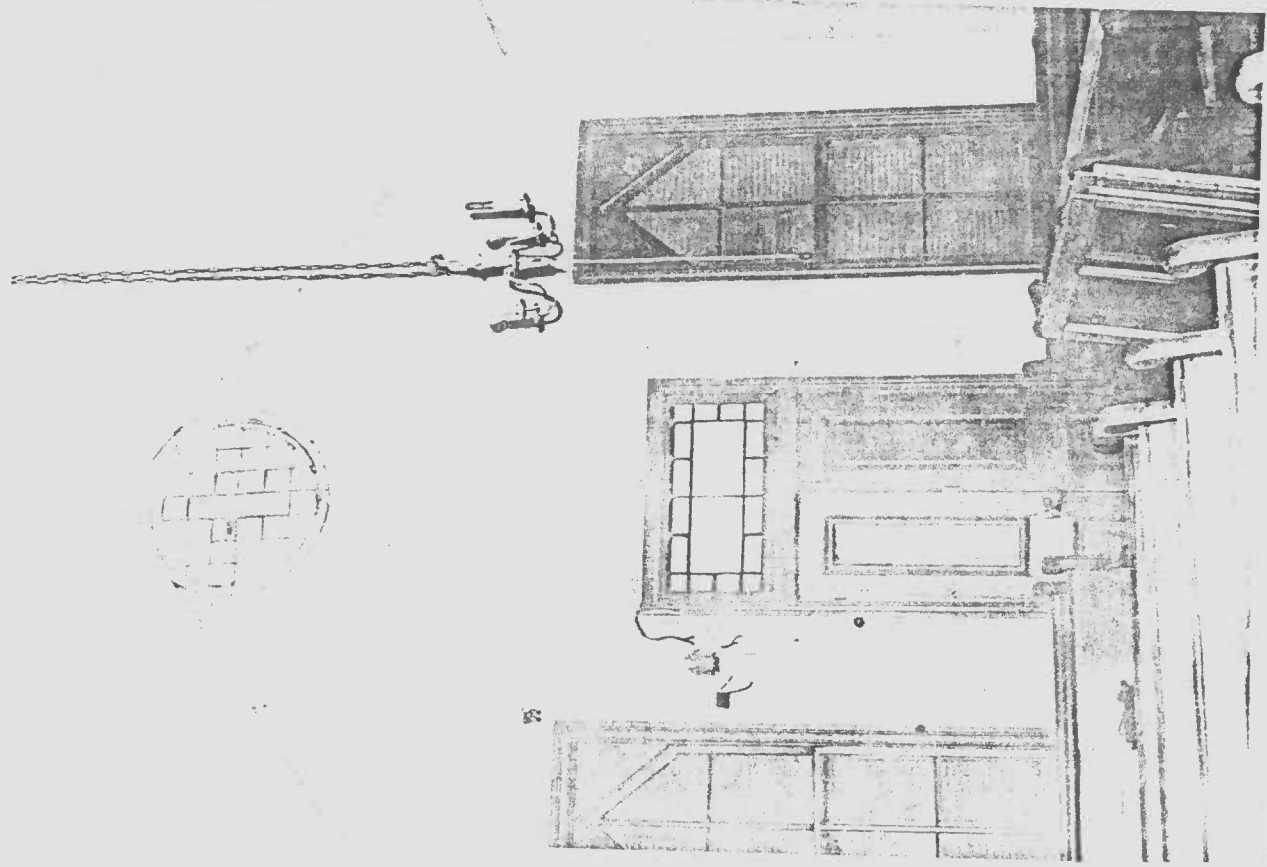
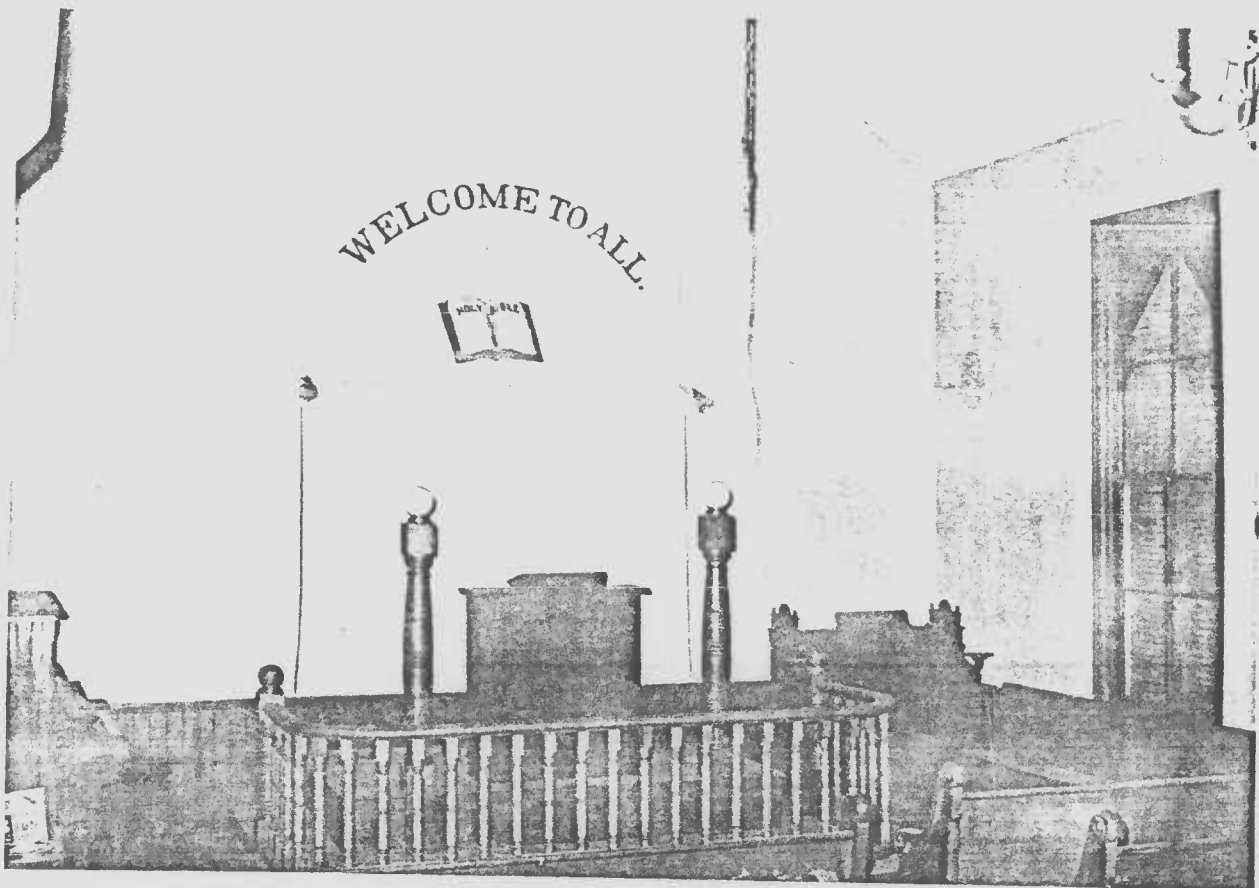
A 18/358240/
4361620

39°22'30"
176°37'30"
4360000m N.
ROAD CLASSIFICATION











BL-1559
St John's Church
Baltimore Co., MD

K. CULHANE

2/2000

MD 5170

2/2 view of monument

PROTECTED 011
220 07**NN 1 10 2(040)



BA 1559

St. John's Church - Cemetery

Baltimore Co, MD

K. Culhane

2/12/00

MDHP

PROTECTED
>013
220 07** N N 1 00 2 (040)

Grave and Landscape View to North

2 of 3



BA. 1559

St. John's Church - Cemetery

Baltimore Co., MD

K. Culhane

2/1/00

MOSTPO

Gravestones View to north

3 of 3

PROJEC2000< 2014
220 07** N N N 1 00 2 (040)

Easement on St. John's Church

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

COC-9-BA 1559
COC-9-BA 1771

MAGI # 0315595608

MAGI # 0317715604

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC ST. JOHN'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

BA 1559

BA 1771

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 7538 Bellona Avenue (Church)
7536 Bellona Avenue (Parsonage)

CITY, TOWN

Ruxton

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Baltimore County

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

—DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

—STRUCTURE

—SITE

—OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

—PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

—BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

—IN PROCESS

—BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

—OCCUPIED

☒ UNOCCUPIED

—WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

—YES: RESTRICTED

—YES: UNRESTRICTED

—NO

PRESENT USE

—AGRICULTURE

—COMMERCIAL

—EDUCATIONAL

—ENTERTAINMENT

—GOVERNMENT

—INDUSTRIAL

—MILITARY

—MUSEUM

—PARK

—PRIVATE RESIDENCE

—RELIGIOUS

—SCIENTIFIC

—TRANSPORTATION

☒ OTHER/Vacant

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Trustees of The Colored Methodist Protestant St. John's Chapel of
Baltimore County, c/o Mrs. Marie Brown, Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

et al.

6203 Falls Road

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21209

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Courts Building

Liber #: GH1 51

Folio #: 134

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland 21204

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE MHT's Towson Survey of 1979
(Based on erroneous tax maps.)

DATE

1979

—FEDERAL ☒ STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

21 State Circle (also at Historic Towson, Inc.)

CITY, TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland 21401

7 DESCRIPTIONST. JOHN'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

BA-1559

CONDITION☐ EXCELLENT☐ GOOD☒ FAIR (CH)☐ DETERIORATED☒ RUINS (PARS.)☐ UNEXPOSED**CHECK ONE**☒ UNALTERED (CH)☒ ALTERED (PARS.)**CHECK ONE**☒ ORIGINAL SITE☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

1. Church

The cornerstone of this Gothic Revival building identifies it as "St. Johns A.U.M.P. Church A.D. 1886." This replacement church measures 35 feet, 11 inches deep by 20 feet, 7 inches wide and in all probability stands upon the foundations of the log church shown in a watercolor executed in 1835. The church is of frame, three narrow bays wide by three longer bays deep. The tall windows and doors are regular in their placement and have frames exhibiting a modified lancet arch. Each window is fitted with louvered shutters. The sashes are double-hung, in four-over-four format, with lancet-shaped lights at the top. The glass is clear.

The external covering is board-and-batten with the gable ends being decorated with fishscale shingles.

The gable-end roof is steeply pitched, is covered with modern shingles and has a closed-cap interior flue chimney in the middle of its south side.

The east end is the "front" of the building and is the most formal in appearance. The lancet arch entrance occupies the central bay. It has a Queen Anne style transom which compliments the oculus in the gable above. This circular opening is filled with colored glass fixed with a grid pattern of mullions typical of the Queen Anne fashion. The window was set at an angle, however, upsetting the harmony of the arrangement.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

(continued)

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1886 (Church)
Before 1876 (parsonage) BUILDER/ARCHITECT George Horn

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The congregation of St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church forms a link with the period before Emancipation; the church body traces its origins to the efforts of both free blacks and slaves. (1) The parsonage is a physical link with the earliest period. The church building is a replacement structure of 1886, but most likely stands on the old foundation of 1835, and is a gem-like example of country Gothic Revival as prescribed for small congregations by the theory of ecclesiology. The key documents in the history of the Church have survived, and various 19th Century maps show the chapel and sometimes the outbuildings.

The Church history is intimately tied to the Scott family of Bare Hills neighborhood on the Falls Road a mile or more north of the present Baltimore City line. The Church was originally convenient to Falls Road residents but, in 1861, it was rendered somewhat less accessible by the impoundment of Jones Falls and the filling up of Lake Roland.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES ST. JOHN'S METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

Architectural descriptions by Wayne Nield II in Historic Towson, Inc.'s Survey.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.75

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

S85½ W 9 perches (148 ft.)
S4½ E 15 " (247.5 ft.)
N85½ E 9 " until it intersects northline of "Samuel's
Hope" or the "Hop Yard"
With straight line to Beginning.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	NONE	COUNTY	NONE
STATE	NONE	COUNTY	NONE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John W. McGrain, Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning

DATE

March 25, 1981

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

TELEPHONE

494-3495

CITY OR TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 3, ITEM 7, PAGE 4 ST. JOHN'S METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

through to light the stairs. The enclosure of those stairs is not original and one wonders what relationship there is, if any, between this fact and the off-center gable window at the top. The placement of that window and the protruding beam on the exterior of the south end could be indicative of a fireplace; however, the southside would be an odd place for one.

The second level is characterized by its knee walls and trapezoidal ceiling. The room is divided transversely by a partition. That wall bisects the dormer, which gives each half an east window and a gable window.

Deterioration in this area allows one to see machine-cut laths and parts of the roof construction. The roof consists of vertically sawn timbers cut by machine. Rafters are joined at the top by a ridgeboard and the trusses are nailed to flat false plates, in some instances with wire nails. The upper half of each knee-wall is frame.

The fires of March 23 and March 25, 1981, consumed much of the 20th Century laths and roofing. The rear shed was practically consumed. The parsonage was almost purified to its basic stone cabin starting point. This vernacular-styled dwelling cannot be Colonial, as no stone structures were found on "The Hopyard" in the 1798 tax list.

3. Church Hall (BA 1772)

The church hall has been transformed into a dwelling, described as a bungaloid style by Historic Towson's report. The

CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 4, ITEM 7, PAGE 5 ST. JOHN'S METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

tall windows have been shortened by insertion of wood panels to reduce their height. The structure is in an advanced state of decay and its retention is not recommended by inspecting contractors.

CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 1, ITEM 8, PAGE 2 ST. JOHN'S METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

The Scott family traces its line to a free man, believed to have been part Indian, Tobias Scott of Saint Mary's County. His son, James Aquilla Scott (I) was born in 1784 and settled in Baltimore County, purchasing land on Falls Road from Johnzee Hook in 1839 (2). James Aquilla Scott (I) practiced as a blacksmith and served as a minister. His home at Falls Road and Walnut Avenue appears as "A. Scott" property on Sidney's 1850 county map. (3) The Scotts, Aquilla and his wife, had at least eleven children, including Aquilla Scott (II). (4)

In 1833, Elijah Fishpaw and his wife, Catherine, and also Mary Fishpaw deeded three-quarters of an acre of "The Hopyard" to Benjamin Johnson, Aquilla Scott, Thomas Harvey, Wesley Hayes, Joshua Harvey, " ... all colored people and descendants from Africa who are nominated trustees for certain purposes hereinafter ... in trust to and for ... the use of that part of the descendants of Africa which forms and makes the Bethel Episcopal Methodist Religious Society for their use to make a burying ground on for the interment of their dead and for them to erect a meeting house thereon for the purpose of meeting there as often as they may think proper in order to worship Almighty God in spirit and truth ..." (5)

The church appears on the water supply survey map of 1852 and on the 1857 decorative county map by Robert Taylor. (6) The original place of worship was log, and is depicted in a contemporary watercolor by Eliza Hawkins, who marked the drawing with the date 1835. (7)

CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 2, ITEM 8, PAGE 3, ST. JOHN'S METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

James Aquilla Scott dropped dead at age 76 on February 22, 1858. His tombstone at his Falls Road home graveyard reads, "Church of AME. Here lies Aquilla Scott the minister who passed away while in prayer in the Church below now joins the Church above." (8)

A stone in the churchyard on Bellona Avenue mentions another early member, reading, "In memory of Harriett Tate, Beloved Mother of St. Johns"

The pulpit was taken over by James Aquilla Scott II, who also doubled as a blacksmith. The second James Aquilla Scott bought a slave wife from a Cuba Road landowner to rescue her from a life of abuse. Her name was Anar Gough according to her grave-stone, although Aquilla Scott's will called her Honora. (9)

The church body was incorporated on May 2, 1860, as St. John's Colored Methodist Protestant Church. (10) In July 1866, Aquilla Phillips and his wife, Priscilla (Scott) Phillips, conveyed the three- to four-acre church property to the trustees of a corporation entitled "The Colored Methodist Protestant St. Johns Chapel of Baltimore County." The consideration named was \$800. (11)

The 1866 deed reflects some problem that had beset the congregation. Aquilla Phillips had taken personal title to the same property donated to the trustees of 1833 the year before conveying to the new corporation. Phillips purchased it from a white landowner of the Ruxton area, Lewis J. Roberts, and paid \$800.

CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 3, ITEM 8, PAGE 4, ST. JOHN'S METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

The deed index fails to show how the trustees lost temporary control of this lot. (12)

The 1876 Tax Ledger described the improvements at "St. John's Methodist P. Church" as:

Tract of Land E. Side of N.C.R.R. near Lake Roland

1 Acre, less church occup.

Improvements - 2 small stone houses. (13)

E. Robinson's 1882 map of the Baltimore region showed three buildings on a small lot near Lake Station on the Northern Central Railroad south of Malvern Avenue. (14)

The original church perished, possibly between 1876 and 1886, because a new structure was established that year, and the county paper announced:

The corner-stone for St. John's A.U.M.P. Church, Lake Roland, will be laid by Rev. E. W. Scott on Sunday, August 29, at 3 o'clock p.m., to which all are invited. (15)

The ceremonies were reported in the Sun the following day, and the text sheds some light on the church history:

Corner-stone Laying. The corner-stone of the St. John's A.U.M.P. Church, near Lake Station, Northern Central Railroad, was laid yesterday with appropriate ceremonies. Rev. D. W. Scott, president of the A.U.M.P. Conference, preached an excellent sermon, the services being held in the open air, in the shade of a number of large trees. The contents of the stone were a copy of the Bible, a Methodist hymn book, a copy of the Discipline of the church, also a copy of the SUN of Saturday, a paper on which was written the names of the President of the United States, Governor of Maryland, and a list of judges of the Baltimore County Circuit. The church will be a pretty little frame building, 20 by 35 feet, situated on a hill overlooking Lake Roland, about a quarter of a mile above Lake Station. The corner-stone is situ-

CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 4, ITEM 8, PAGE 5, ST. JOHN'S METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

ated in the south-east corner of the church. A number of members of the colored lodge of the order of the Seven Wise Men of Melvale, were in attendance. Mr. George Horn, of Towsontown, is the builder. (16)

The papers also show that the Rev. E. W. Scott, a member of the founding family, preached the same evening at a camp meeting held at Paradise Grove on Merryman's Lane (somewhere near present University Parkway). Other newspaper mentions show that Edwin Scott (1841-1891) was the pastor of Towson's black church, St. James A.U.M.P. (17)

The new church was of tasteful design, its windows trimmed in stained glass, its outer walls in the purposely picturesque board and batten format. The contractor is listed in State directories as a carpenter in Towson in 1878 and 1887, the last name spelled both Horn and Horne. (18)

The second James Aquilla Scott lived until 1892. The church was affiliated with the A.M.E. denomination but three generations of Scotts held the title as trustees. In the 1950s, the parish started to decline due to changes in transportation patterns, the development of other churches, and the disappearance of live-in help in the large suburban houses of Ruxton. The local church structure tried to persuade the family to surrender the church to the conference, but the Scotts declined. Eventually, the congregation could no longer support a minister and, after carrying on with occasional services, the doors were closed.

The Scott family found themselves forced to pay residential taxes in spite of the fact that the entire premises is either

CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 5, ITEM 8, PAGE 6, ST. JOHN'S METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

church or cemetery property. To propound the problem, the State Department of Assessment and Taxation charged them with two acres of land and also failed to mark the site on the tax map and, in addition to that, indexed the account to the wrong tax map (the one containing Lutherville), and also listed the address as the Falls Road. (19)

In 1980-1981, with the help of the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Improvement Association, the family was relieved of the tax burden and assured of a three-year refund. In early 1981, a number of newspaper articles in a neighborhood publication recounted the struggles of the trustees to maintain the chapel, and a scout group agreed to help weed the cemetery, and the Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission agreed to consider the site for the Preliminary Landmarks List.

Shortly after receiving the limited local publicity in the Roland Park-based publication, The Messenger, a suspicious fire took place in the parsonage on the afternoon of March 23, 1981, burning some relatively late partitions and carpenter work in the attic.

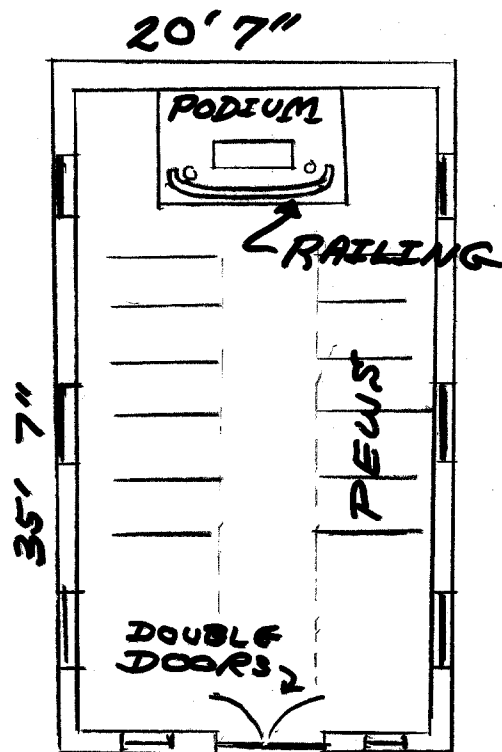
NOTES:

1. Gail O'Donovan, "Notes, St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Scott Family," Ruxton, Md., Typescript, March 20, 1981.
2. Baltimore City Deeds, TK 232:222.
3. J. C. Sidney and P. J. Browne, "Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys," James M. Stephens, Publisher, Baltimore, 1850.

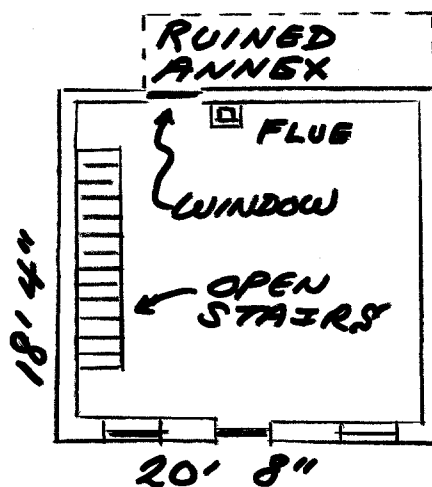
CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 6, ITEM 8, PAGE 7, ST. JOHN'S METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

NOTES contd.

4. O'Donovan, Notes, 1981.
5. Baltimore City Deeds, TK 293:___ (October 29, 1839).
6. Robert Taylor, "Map of the City and County of Baltimore from Actual Surveys," Baltimore, 1857. Thomas P. Chiffelle, "Map of the City of Baltimore and Part of Baltimore County, including the Valley of the Great Gunpowder River ...," A. Hoen, Baltimore, 1852.
7. Original artwork in possession of Mrs. Marie Brown, 6203 Falls Road, Bare Hills.
8. O'Donovan, "Notes."
9. Baltimore County Wills, JEB 14:89.
10. Baltimore County Incorporation Records, Index, Liber JB 1, Index Page "S." The full text was copied into the Baltimore County Chatel Records, Liber 4:175, a series that has been moved to the Hall of Records, Annapolis.
11. Baltimore County Deeds, GHL 51:134.
12. B.C. Deeds, JHL 47:57.
13. Baltimore County Tax Ledger, District 9, 1876, n.p. No stone houses are to be found in the John Fishpaw Jr. listing for "The Hopyard" in the 1798 tax list.
14. E. Robinson, "Map of the City of Baltimore and Vicinity," New York, 1882.
15. Baltimore County Union, August 21, 1886.
16. Baltimore Sun, August 30, 1886, p. 4, col. 5.
17. American, August 30, 1886, p. 4. Baltimore County Union, November 27, 1886.
18. John R. Bland, Ed., The Maryland Directory and State Gazetteer, 1887. The Baltimore Publishing Company: Baltimore, 1887, p. 121. Also, 1878, p. 544.
19. O'Donovan, "Notes," 1981.



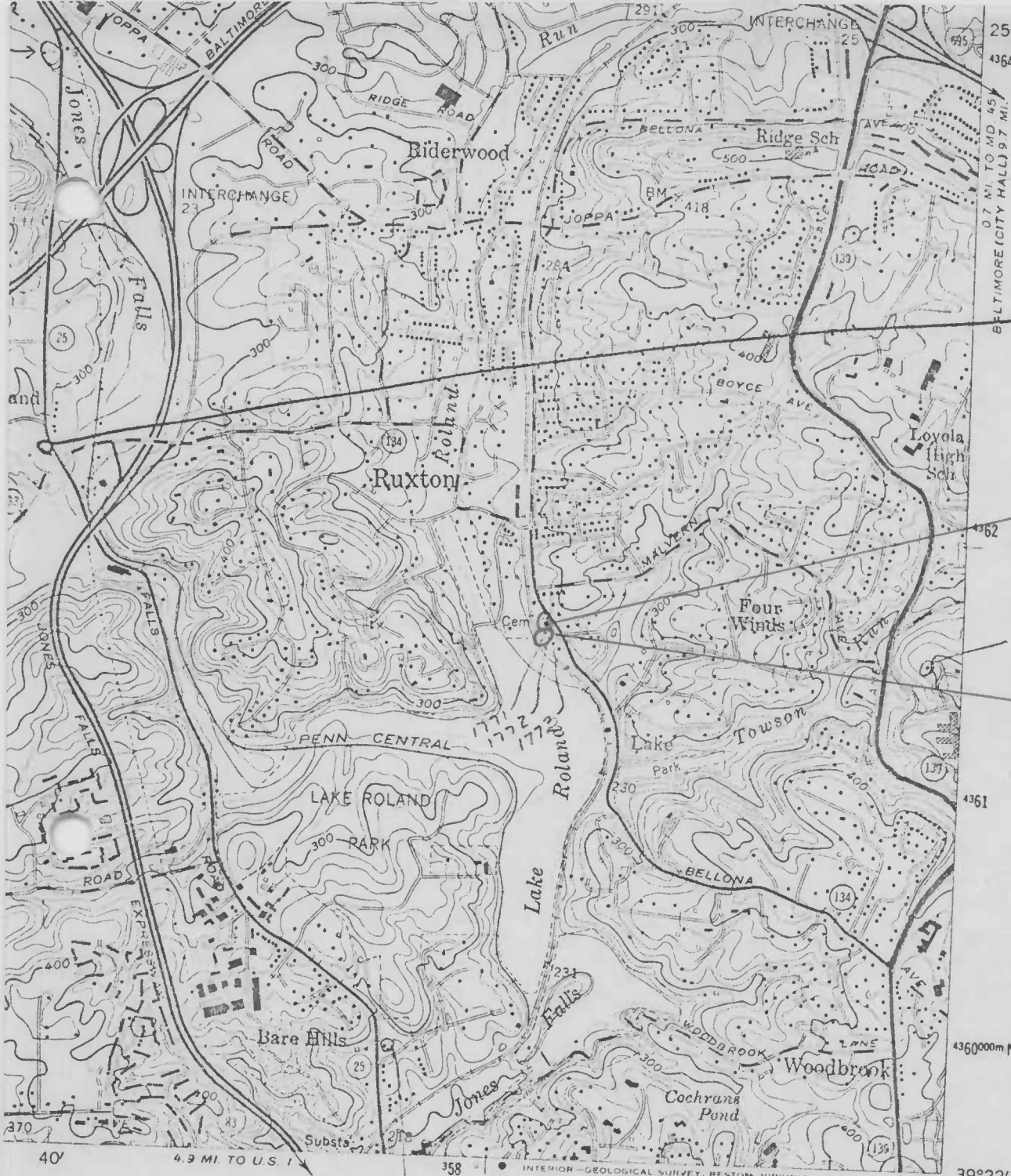
CHURCH, BA 1559



PARSONAGE, BA 1771

FLOOR PLAN

ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH BA 1559
ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE BA 1771



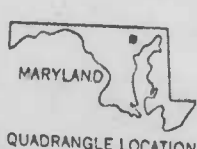
L.M. Cochran's

1762
1815
Add dot,
first bldg
north of
Coxon Rd

BA
1559

1723

BA 1771



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	—————	Light-duty	—————
Medium-duty	—————	Unimproved dirt

☐ Interstate Route
 ☐ U. S. Route
 ☐ State Route

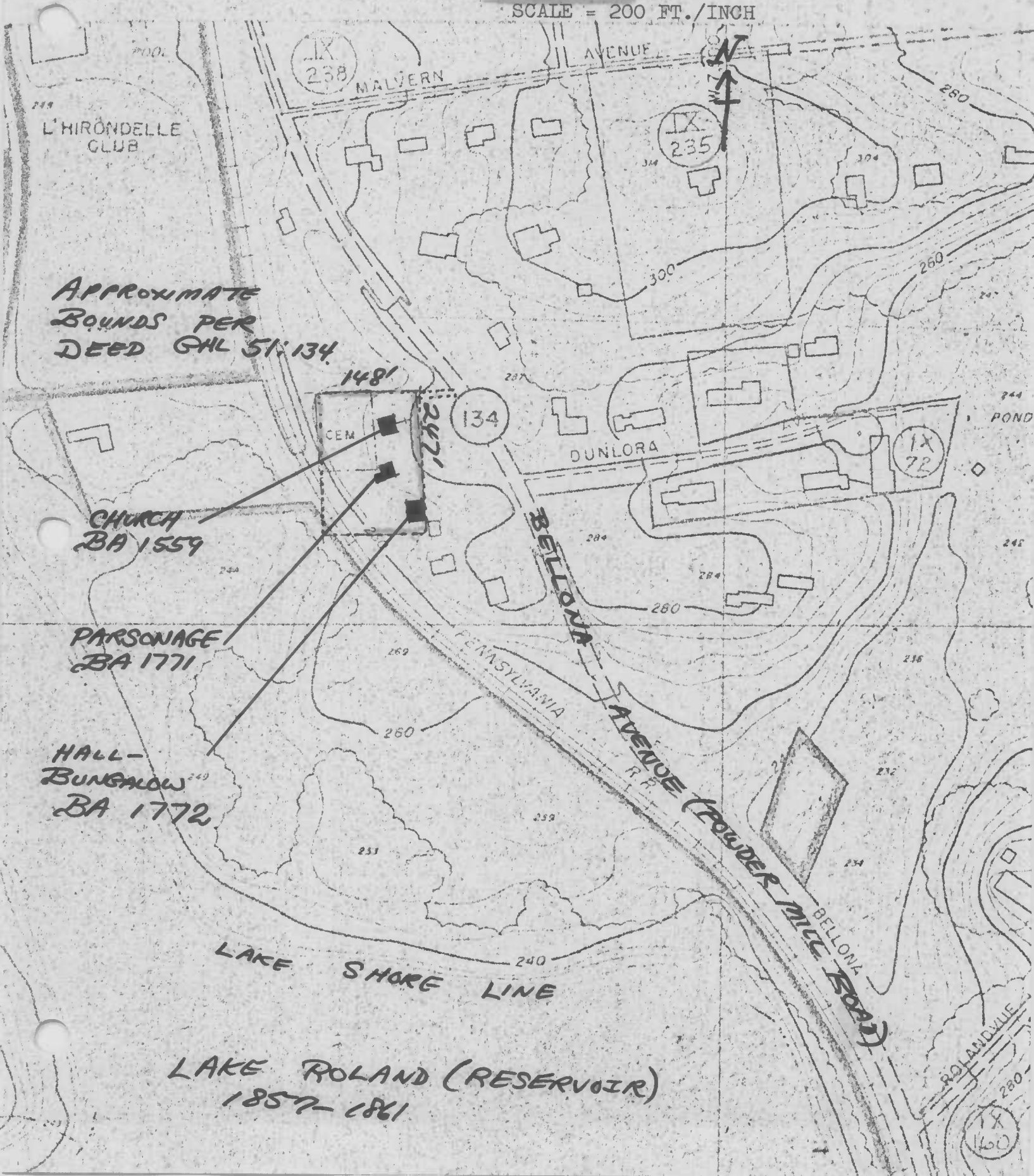
ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH BA 1559
 ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE BA 1771
 Portion of U.S.G.S. 7.5-Minute
 Quad, COCKEYSVILLE, Maryland

As shown in purple compiled by the Geological
 Survey from aerial photographs taken 1966 and 1974
 to a scale of 1:25,000. Contour interval 20 feet.
 Elevation of 370 feet also shown in other areas.

ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH BA-1559
ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

PROPERTY MAP

SCALE = 200 FT./INCH



1702
RICHARD
91ST

JACOBSONS

1702
THOS. CROSSING

Jacobi Pasture
etc in this AREA

Bosley's Adventure 499A
1764 John Bosley

A Res. on Berry's Add.
Miller's choice (1726)
Cook's Purchase
Bosley's Meadow.

Carroll

100 ACRES
ERCE. WELCH

Bosley's Adventure

Shoemaker's
HALL

HECTOR'S
HOPYARD
300 ACRES
1694
HECTOR
MC CHAIN

SAMUEL'S HOPE
500 ACRES
1694 THOS HOOKER

BARE HILLS 175A 1751 DULANEY Family

Young's DELICNT
JD A 1746
James Young

LABYRINTH

VALLIENT
HAZZARD
100 ACRES
1727
James CHILCOAT

TIMBER
RISER
60 ACRES
1757
HALL and
WHITE

MORGAN'S DELICNT
500 ACRES
1694 James
Murray

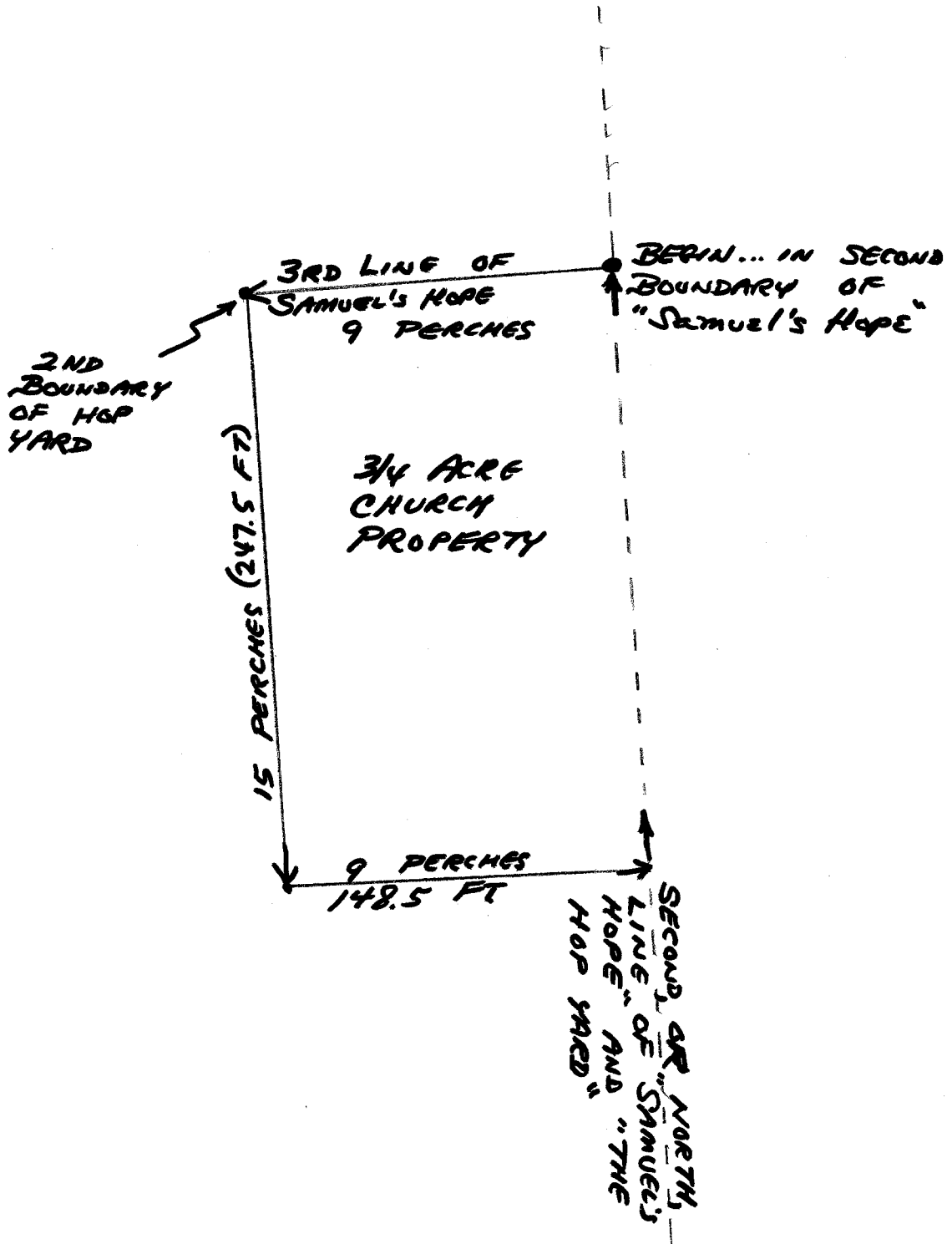
ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH RA-1559
Plat of Early Land Surveys
by Dr. Arthur Tracey of
Carroll County. Shows "Hopyard."

ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH
ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

BA 1559
BA 1771

40-SCALE

Property Plat--Drawn from
calls in Baltimore County
Deeds GHL 51:134 (1866) and
JHL 47:57 (1865)



LIST OF COLOR SLIDES - ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH BA 1559
ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE BA 1771

1. St. John's M.E. Church, Main & north facades, from NE
2. St. John's " " , " & south facade from SE (1980)
3. St. John's " " , rear & south facades, from SW
4. St. John's " " , interior and rear oculus
5. St. John's " " , " 19th Century organ
6. St. John's " " , " typical side window, outside shutters closed.
7. St. John's M. E. Church, interior, oak double entrance doors and stained-glass transom.
8. Parsonage, main or east facade, from east
9. Parsonage, south gable end, from south
10. Parsonage, south gable end and rear; burned-out annex, from SW.
11. Hall or bungalow (BA 1772) from NE.

All photos except No. 2 taken April 1, 19 . All photos by J. McGrain,
Office of Planning and Zoning.



ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH BA 1559
Baltimore County, Maryland
J. McGrain April 1, 1981
Neg located at MHT
Main & north facade, from NE
Photo 1 of 12

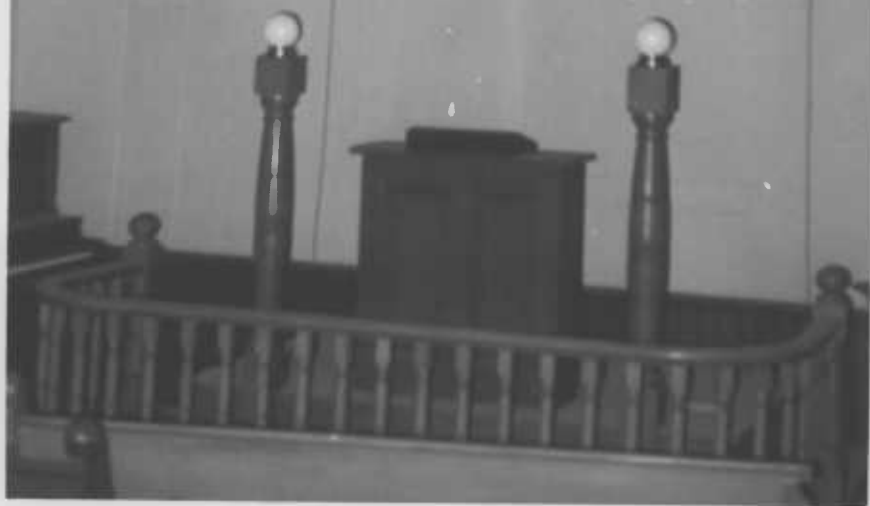


ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH BA 1559
Baltimore County, Maryland
J. McGrain April 1, 1981
Neg. located at MHT
Main and North facades, from NE
Photo 2 of 12



ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH BA 1559
Baltimore County, Maryland
J. McGrain April 1, 1981
Main (east) facade, from east
Neg. located at MHT
Photo 3 of 12

WELCOME TO ALL.



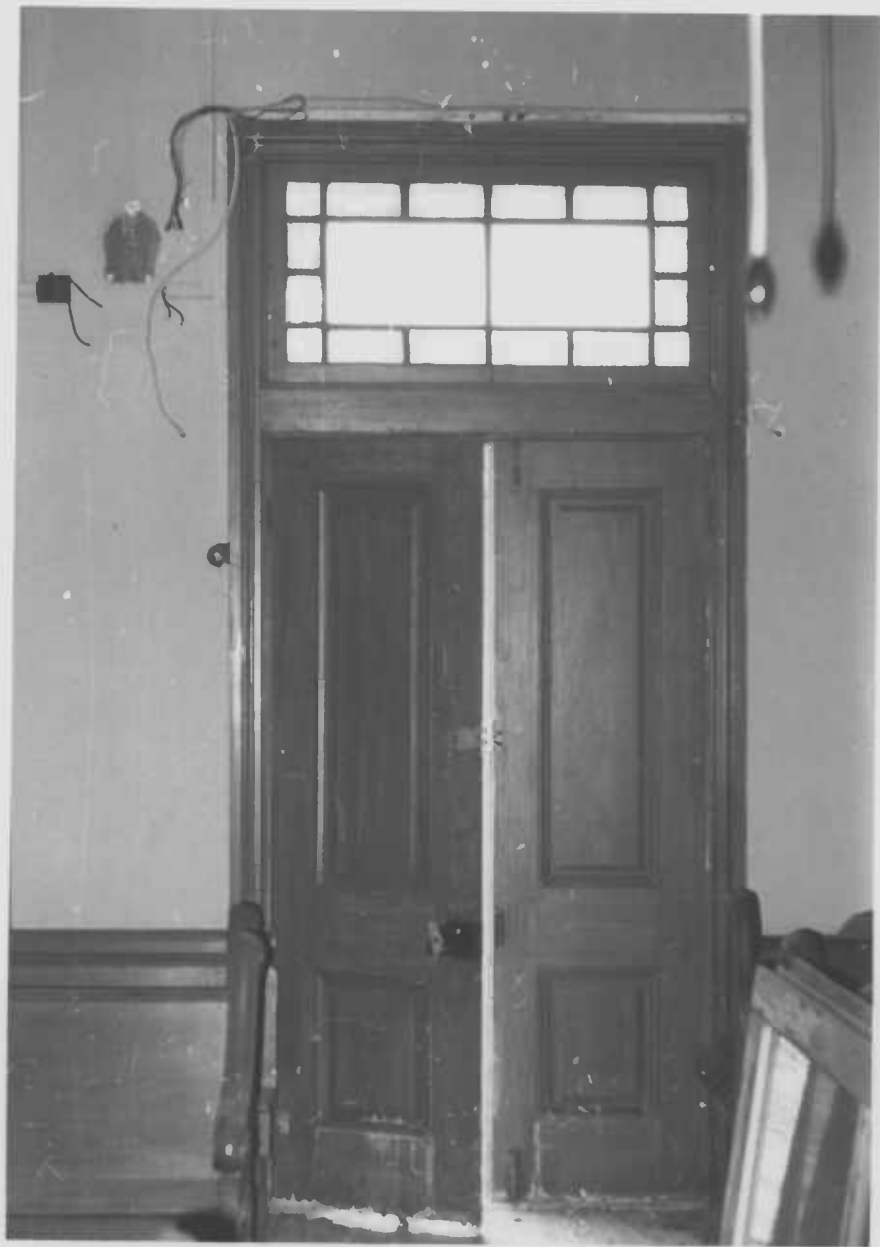
ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH BA 1559
Baltimore County, Maryland
J. McGrain April 1, 1981
Neg. located at MHT
Interior and rear oculus
Photo 4 of 12



ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH BA 1559
Baltimore County, Maryland
J. McGrain April 1, 1981
Neg. located at MHT
Interior, lectern, side window
Photo 5 of 12



ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH BA 1559
Baltimore County, Maryland
J. McGrain April 1, 1981
Neg. located at MHT
Interior & typical side window with
outside shutters closed
Photo 6 of 12



ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH BA 1559
Baltimore County, Maryland
J. McGrain April 1, 1981
Neg. located at MHT
Interior, oak double doors and stained
glass transom
Photo 7 of 12

CAPSULE
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

The handsome structure on Bellona Avenue called "St. John's Church" is a fine example of Victorian vernacular church architecture being a board-and-batten building made decorative by fishscale shingles, stained glass and stylized lancet-arch windows. Although constructed in 1886, it is not the original church on this site. The present building replaces an earlier church of undetermined date.

Both the Chiffel map of 1852 and the Taylor map of 1857 indicate a "Coloured Methodist Meeting House" on this site and there is every reason to believe that blacks have been worshipping here since quite a few years before Emancipation.

In addition to the church building itself the site contains two dwellings and quite a few graves.

What is known locally as a "parsonage" is a small stone house*, one room down and one above with a frame addition on the rear (west). No positive proof of its age has been found but it is said to be the oldest of the three buildings on the site and contemporary with the original church. Not the least interesting structure here is a frame bungalow* which in its original state was a board-and-batten longitudinally oriented residence very similar in appearance and plan to designs offered by Gervase Wheeler in the 19th century.

As a collection, these buildings and the accompanying graveyard are scarce evidence of the fact that blacks have been living, working and worshipping on this site for over one-hundred years and probably much longer. Before there was a Ruxton or a Lake Roland this area was farmed in the manner of a plantation and these buildings appear to be testimony to that fact.

* Stone House - See BA # 1771
Frame Bungalow - See BA # 1772

Easement:

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

BA - 1559
MAGI - 031559 ~~1511~~
5608

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

St. John's Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Bellona Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Towson

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ninth

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Baltimore

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mary E. C. Hughes et al

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

Unknown

CITY, TOWN

___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Courts Building

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

Liber #: 5477

Folio #: 481

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>Feb., 197</u>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Both the Chiffelle 1852 and Taylor 1857 maps show a "Coloured Methodist Meeting House" in this spot along the Old Powder Mill Road (Bellona Avenue). There are the remnants of a black community there today, the survivors being three houses, a church, and a graveyard. A family rents one of the houses, the church is only used occasionally and the other two houses are empty and deteriorating. The graveyard is overgrown and is disappearing. While it seems certain that there was at least a church on this spot in the mid-19th century (prior to Emancipation) the extant buildings do not appear to date prior to that period. The stone dwelling looks like the oldest in this group of buildings, however, no materials can be seen in it that are definitely earlier than the late 19th century.

Church:

The cornerstone of the building identifies it as "St. Johns A.U.M.P. Church A.D. 1886." Because of the 1850's maps it seems logical to assume that this board-and-batten structure, with its beautiful late Victorian decorations, replaced the pre-1860's building in the 1880's. This church is three narrow bays wide and three longer bays deep. The tall windows and doors are regular in their placement and have frames exhibiting a modified lancet arch. Each window has louvered shutters.

The exterior covering is board-and-batten with the gable ends being decorated with fishscale shingles.

The gable end roof is steeply pitched, is covered with modern shingles and has a closed-cap interior flue chimney in the middle of its south side.

The east end is the "front" of the building and is the most formal in appearance. The lancet arch entrance occupies the central bay. It has a Queen Anne style transom which compliments the oculus in the gable above. This circular opening is filled with colored glass fixed with a grid pattern of mullions typical of the Queen Anne fashion. The window was set at an angle, however, upsetting the harmony of the arrangement.

The fishscale portion of the gable is set off from the board-and-batten wall by a moulding utilizing the popular Eastlake-like motif.

The interior could not be examined 2/6/79.

Graveyard:

A large graveyard fills the back yards of the church, the stone dwelling, and a cottage. It is overgrown and in poor condition with many broken and missing stones. There are several stones dating from the 1870's; most of the others are later. The awkward almost irreverent relationships that the cottage has with some of the graves suggests that it was built since many of the graves were dug.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1886

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The handsome structure on Bellona Avenue called "St. John's Church" is a fine example of Victorian vernacular church architecture being a board-and-batten building made decorative by fishscale shingles, stained glass and stylized lancet-arch windows. Although constructed in 1886, it is not the original church on this site. The present building replaces an earlier church of undetermined date.

Both the Chiffel map of 1852 and the Taylor map of 1857 indicate a "Coloured Methodist Meeting House" on this site and there is every reason to believe that blacks have been worshipping here since quite a few years before Emancipation.

In addition to the church building itself the site contains two dwellings and quite a few graves.

What is locally known as a "parsonage" is a small stone house*, one room down and one above with a frame addition on the rear (west). No positive proof of its age has been found but it is said to be the oldest of the three buildings on the site and contemporary with the original church. Not the least interesting structure here is a frame bungalow* which in its original state was a board-and-batten longitudinally oriented residence very similar in appearance and plan to designs offered by Gervase Wheeler in the 19th century.

As a collection, these buildings and the accompanying graveyard are scarce evidence of the fact that blacks have been living, working and worshipping on this site for over one-hundred years and probably much longer. Before there was a Ruxton or a Lake Roland this area was farmed in the manner of a plantation and these buildings appear to be testimony to that fact.

* Stone House - See BA # 1771

Frame Bungalow - See BA # 1772

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Baltimore County Land Records
 "Map of the City and County of Baltimore" J. C. Sidney, 1850 & Robert Taylor, 1857
 Baltimore County Tax Assessment Records

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Attachment

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE _____

COUNTY _____

STATE _____

COUNTY _____

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

WAYNE E. NIELD, II
 HISTORIC TOWSON, INC.

DATE _____

ORGANIZATION

TELEPHONE _____

STREET & NUMBER

STATE _____

CITY OR TOWN

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
 The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 (301) 267-1438

CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 1, ITEM 7, PAGE 2 ST. JOHN'S METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

The fishscale portion of the gable is set off from the board-and-batten wall by a moulding utilizing the popular Eastlake type of motif.

The interior of the church (in 1981) is very plain, the walls painted plaster. The nave is furnished with oak pews. There is a rostrum fenced with oak railing. The oak lectern is flanked on either side by an oak post supporting a circular globe for electric lights. On the left side of the rostrum is a piano, on the left a 19th Century foot-powered organ. The organ is in an oak frame with some gothic revival carving.

Viewed from the inside, the doors and window sashes are seen to be oak. The painted message "WELCOME TO ALL" over the lectern on the rear wall is the only interior decoration.

2. Parsonage (As described by Wayne L. Nield, Historic Towson, Inc.):

The parsonage is a true one-and-a-half story dwelling with a plan of one room up and one down, with a single room added to the rear (or west). Dimensions are 20 feet, 8 inches on the main facade by a depth of 18 feet, 4 inches.

The walls are made of uncoursed brownish fieldstone that has been stuccoed. The stone rises to the apex of the gables. There is also a gable-end roof which has an almost oversized roof dormer. There are no eaves on the ends, and even the sides have an overhang of only 10 to 12 inches. While the dormer appears to be original to the present roof, its six-light casements are not compatible with the four-light casements of the gables. Machine-sawn

CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 2, ITEM 7, PAGE 3 ST. JOHN'S METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

rafters and cut wire nails suggest that if this building is more than 80 or 90 years old, its roof has been changed.

Each end of the parsonage is windowless except for a small casement window in each gable. That of the north is centralized but the south window is off center to the west. It is interesting to note that these deep casements are presently mounted on the inside bay of the opening. The main facade faces east, as does the church. It is three bays wide: a centrally located door flanked by windows. The south window, however, is not as large as the north and it may be an alteration. The door and north window share the same wooden jack arch and the taller north window has a large fieldstone sill.

The west facade is nearly obliterated by the frame shed-roofed addition. Interior examination suggests that it once had a door on the northside and a single window on the southside of it (which might have been the original appearance of the east facade as well).

The single room downstairs is characterized by the windowless north wall and the presence of the enclosed stairs on the south wall. A flue chimney occupies the center of the west wall and separated the door and window.

The original mouldings of this room are a plain architrave that is not unlike the design seen in some Federal period houses.

It appears that the south window of the east wall was cut

St. Johns Church/
Coloured Methodist Meeting House Site

<u>LIBER</u>	<u>FOLIO</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>GRANTOR</u>	<u>GRANTEE</u>
5477	481	September 9, 1974	Mary Edyth C. Hughes	Mary Edyth C. Hughes Thomas John Hughes
<p>Lot # 2 on Plat of Montrose...northeast side of Northern Central Rail Road with the northwest side of public road...northwest binding on Rail Road...South 2° East line of whole tract of land ...reversing ...24 - 65/100 perches to a stone...North 85 3/4° East 5 1/2 perches to northwest side of road...southeast on road till beginning...2 acres, 1 rood and 18 square perches.</p>				
5297	60	January 15, 1958	William F. Mckewen	Mary E. C. Hughes
534	212	November 15, 1920	Charles J. Bouchet	William F. Mckewen & wf
534	210	November 15, 1920	William F. Mckewen & wife	Charles J. Bouchet
498	59	April 5, 1918	James R. Warman	Henry & William Mckewen
455	477	December 29. 1915	James B. Finman	Mary Mildred Wright (Also Helen Mckewen)
433	109	July 21, 1914	Bridget Roddy (Finman's daughter)	Helen Mckewen
39	365	January 4, 1864	James L. McDaniel	Owen Finman

Tax Assessments

1876 Tax Assessment Record for Baltimore County District 9

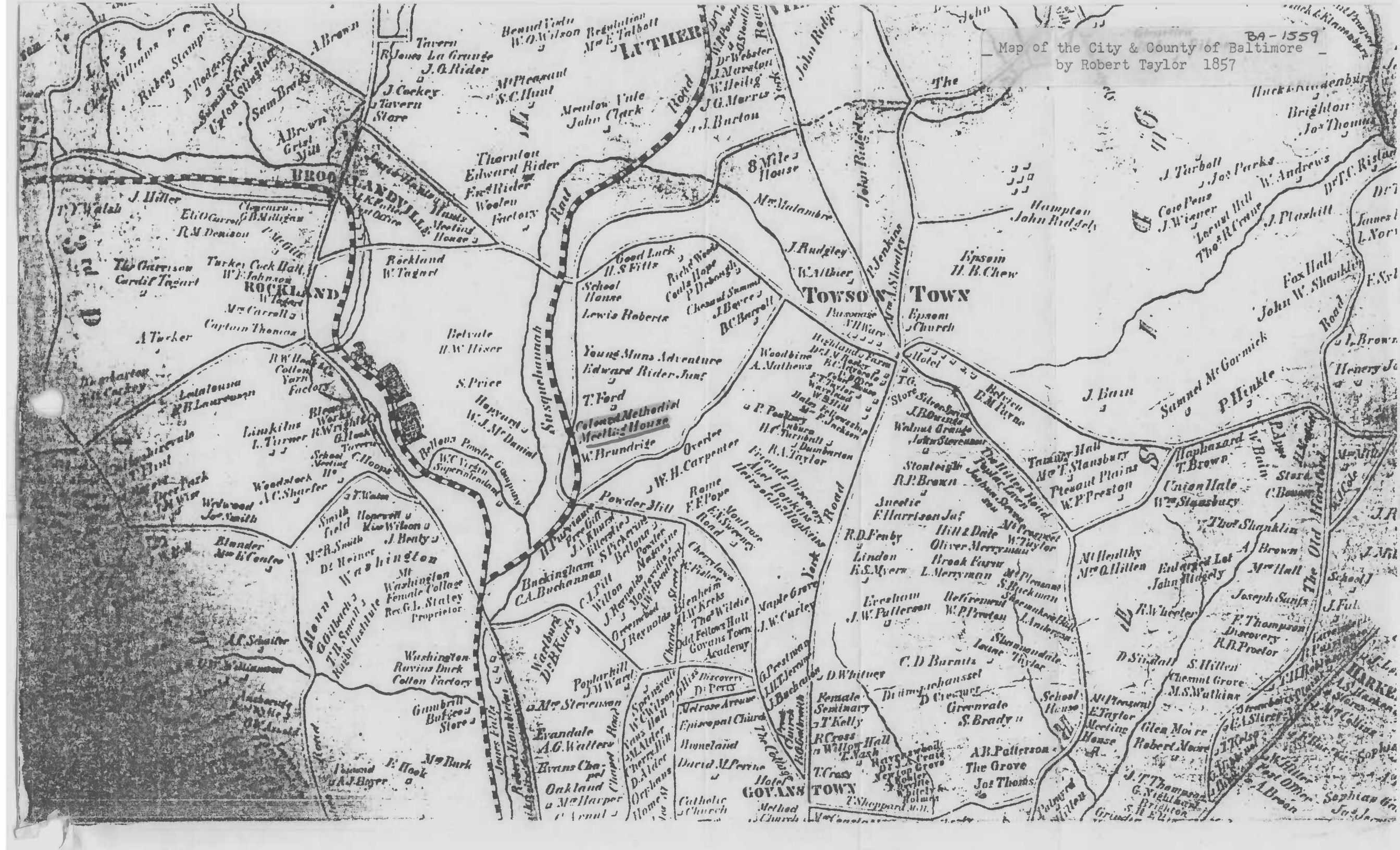
St. John's Methodist P. Church

Tract of land E. side N.C.R.Rd. near Lake Roland

1 acre, lefs church occup.

Improvements - 2 small stone houses.

Map of the City & County of Baltimore
by Robert Taylor 1857



St Paul's
Sch

Country Club
Park

Lutherville

Valley

Brooklandville

Riderwood

A close-up of a street map showing the letters 'AVE' and 'ch.' on a grid of streets.

Rockland

Ruxton

Loyola
High
Sch

Four

PENNSYLVANIA 5A-15517

LAKE ROLAND

~~PARK~~

nit Park

Bonnie View
Golf Course

Ranchleigh

Bare Hills

Woodbrook

Cochrans

40

BALTIMORE (JUNC. U.S. 1) 5 MI

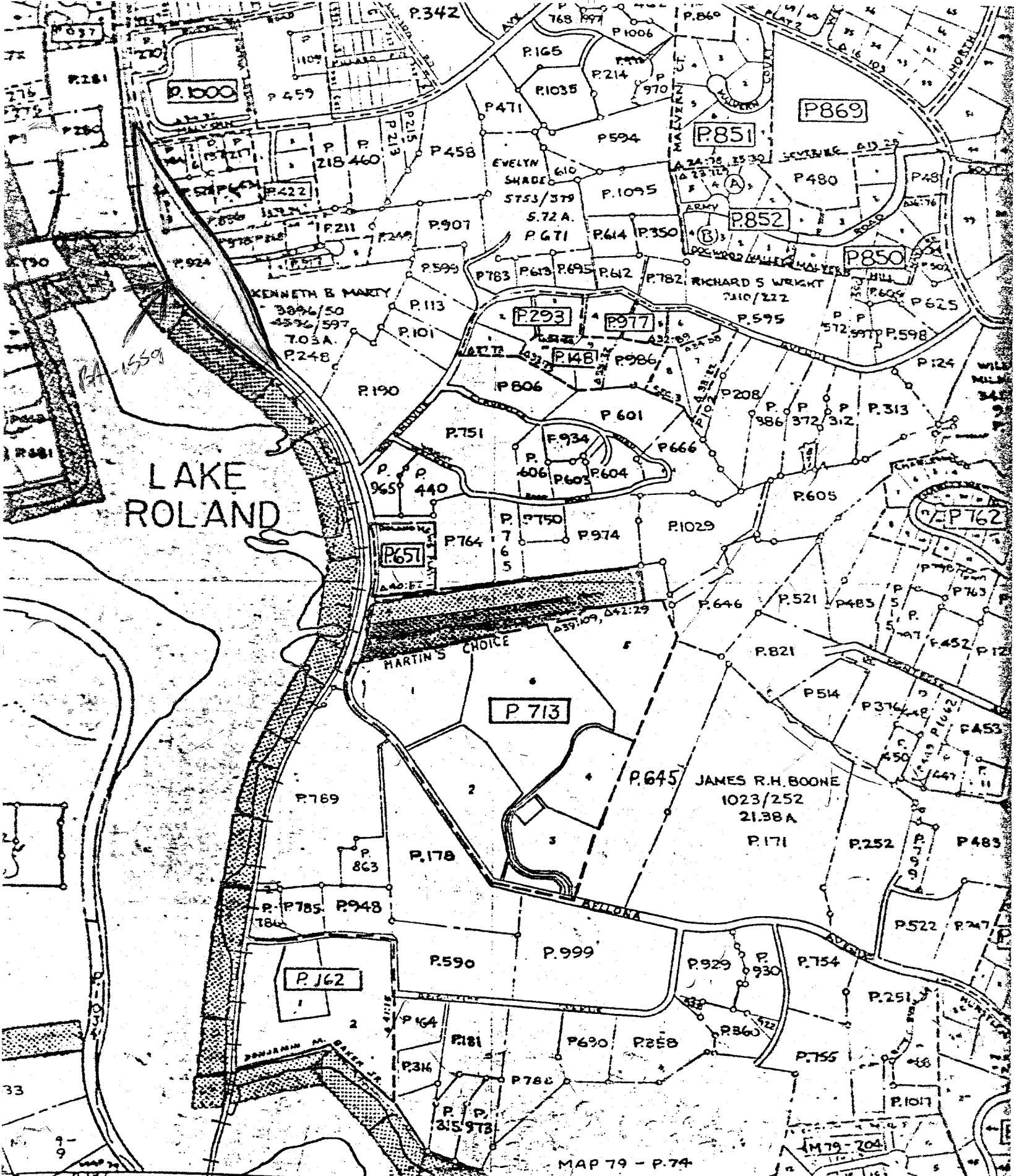
INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C.-1958-NS
350000m F

359000m.

BALTIMORE (JUNC. U.S. 1) 4.5 MI.

39°2'

76°37'30"

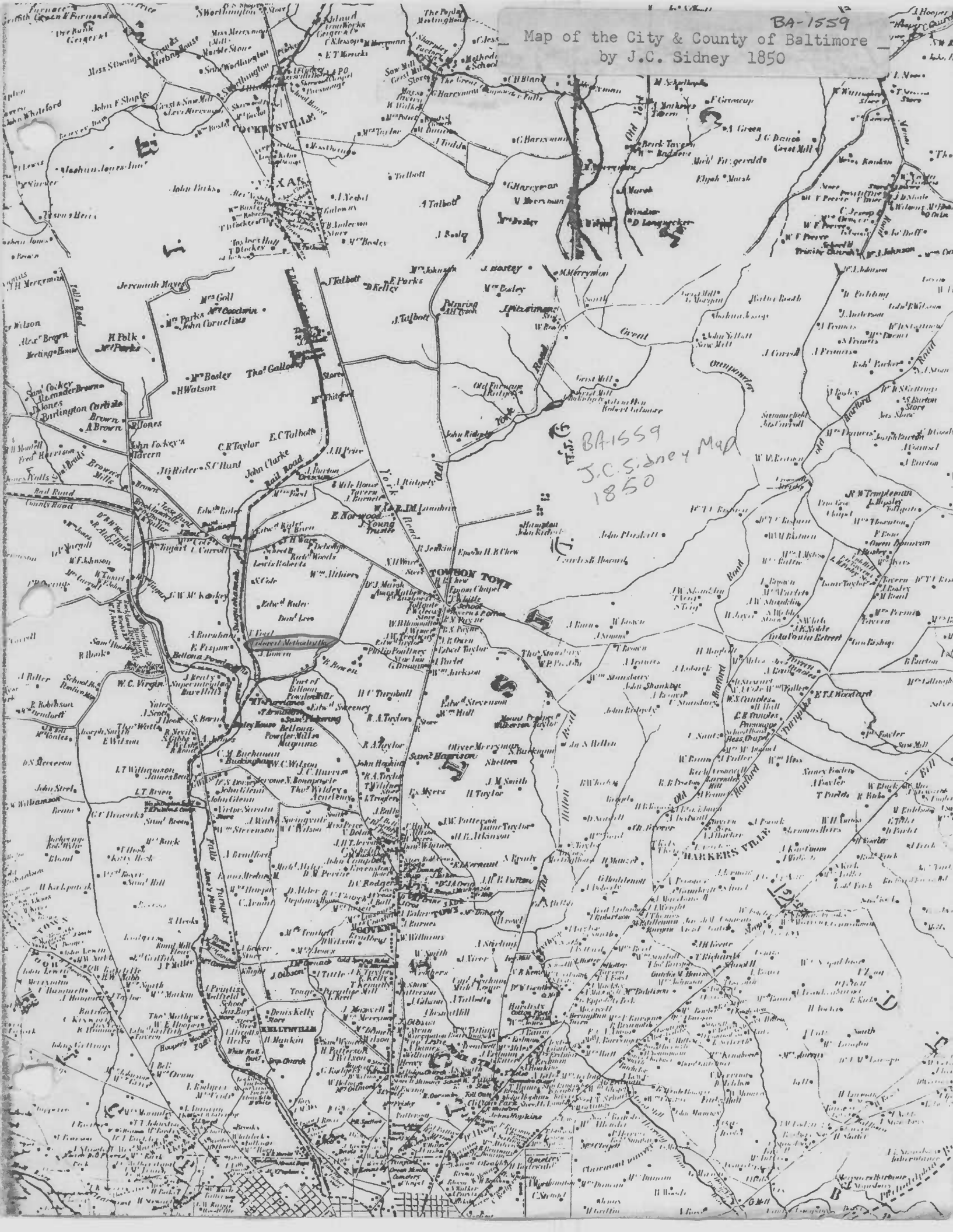


OF ASSESSMENTS & TAXATION
TAX MAP DIVISION
INFORMATION SHOWN HEREON HAS BEEN COMPILED
FROM DESCRIPTIONS AND IS NOT AN ACTUAL SURVEY
AND NOT BE USED FOR LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS - USERS
OF MAPS ARE URGED TO NOTIFY DEPARTMENT OF

PROPERTY LINE
SUB-DIVISION BOUNDARY
CONTINUING OWNERSHIP - Z I E - Z - Z - Z
PARCEL NUMBER - P. 349 (ASSIGNED TO IDENTIFY AND INDEX
OWNERSHIP MUST BE PRECEDED

69

Map of the City & County of Baltimore
by J.C. Sidney 1850





BA-1559

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
S.E. CORNER

J. CORCORAN
7/79



BA - 1559

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH/
COLOURED METHODIST
MEETING HOUSE
S.W. CORNER

W. NIELD
3/79